



# CycleReading

WORKING FOR A CYCLE FRIENDLY READING

[www.readingcyclecampaign.org.uk](http://www.readingcyclecampaign.org.uk)

December 2018 No 141

## Traffic Free Cycle Route



*Looking down South Street from Watlington Street*

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Campaign Diary

October saw an unlooked for improvement to Reading's cycle network, or at least the route along Watlington Street heading south-east from the town centre (Routes R2 & R20).

Watlington Street (see map overleaf) is a key artery for cyclists heading to the University, hospital and numerous schools in the area, as well as those venturing to Earley and beyond.

Although blocked off to motor vehicles at its north end it is, or was, a rat run for motorists using

South Street to get from or to London Road.

This has now changed with the introduction of two rustic looking planters at the eastern end of South Street (see above).

Chaos ensued for the first week as drivers headed down Watlington Street only to find they had to do a U-turn at the end, but it has now settled down to produce a virtually (motor) traffic free route.

In November, Reading Borough Council also filled in some of the worst of the gangs of potholes at

# Campaign News

the western end of Erleigh Road (by Reading School).

So whilst the long-neglected Erleigh Road is still far from pothole free, it is less of a bone-

shaker than it was. Glad tidings indeed - it feels like Christmas has come erleigh.

**Keith Elliott**  
RCC Secretary



## Reading Borough Council (RBC)

### Winter Report 2018

A Cycle Forum meeting took place on 31 October with RBC, RCC and other representatives present. A range of issues were tabled:

#### Potholes etc

We were informed about the highway maintenance procedures for repairing potholes and other defects. Apparently a slightly more flexible system is being introduced whereby the highway inspectors can report defects that could be a safety hazard for cyclists other than the 50mm (2in) deep by 300mm (1ft) size pothole that triggers



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Once again my sincere thanks for your kind assistance and courtesy in dealing with this claim and bringing it to a successful conclusion.

Jedn Cronin, Kent

# Campaign News

prompt action, or 20mm deep on footways including shared-use paths.

This should help cyclists, but don't expect good surfaces yet! Public complaints about defects are investigated, so keep on reporting them. Rectification of defects is dependent on the inadequate budgets Councils receive from government, or fund themselves. The recent government budget's extra £400m to rectify potholes across the country sounds large, but it is a fraction of the growing £12billion backlog of national highways maintenance.

## LTP/LCWIP

The new Local Transport Plan and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan will apparently have some focus on air quality. What's proposed will be consulted on in January 2019, so watch that space.

## NCN422

Unfortunately, there has been little visible action on the NCN422 central or eastern sections. Some updated plans were included in the next day's Traffic Management Sub-Committee that RCC did not attend; see the link <http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/9616/Item09/pdf/Item09.pdf>.

These include some improved plans particularly to the Wokingham Road section where a mandatory eastbound cycle lane (on carriageway) is now proposed, but still fails to remove some of the mainly University parking which would allow adequate widths for good cycling conditions.

## Vastern Road Roundabout

Apparently some proposals to improve the road markings are still being considered by RBC, but are expected soon. This would be a start, but more changes need to be made to make this roundabout satisfactory for cyclists and other users. Statistics on Crashmap show that a further seven cyclists suffered injuries here in collisions during 2017.

## Town Centre Signing

Many cycle routes and shared-use paths are not signed in the town centre; these include the key routes of Market Place and Town Hall Square. The result is that cyclists do not know where they are allowed to go and pedestrians often criticise cyclists that are legally cycling on an inadequately marked route. After RCC chasing this for three years, RBC now say they will provide

the necessary signing. RCC has sent them an updated reminder list with details and pictures of the signs needed.

## Cow Lane

Cow Lane bridge works should be complete in January, but crossing facilities for cyclists and pedestrians onto the proposed shared-use path are inadequate. More and better crossings will be needed.

## Planning and Cyclists

Cycling provision, or lack of it, in new developments is often a problem, but was not discussed at the Cycle Forum. Attempts to find out progress on major schemes, and to arrange meetings with the planners at RBC, have not been successful.

Key developments include Homebase, Civic Centre and Station Hill sites. Look at the Chatham Place development with no visible cycling infrastructure and imagine how well cyclists could have been incorporated. RCC will try and arrange meetings with RBC to try and ensure that cycling is adequately considered and provided for.

**John Lee**  
RBC Campaigner for RCC

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## Updating Our Records

Please let us know if any of your details have changed, such as when you move house or get a new e-mail address.

Please send your details to the RCC Membership Secretary either to 29 Church Road, Earley RG6 1EY, or by emailing [membership@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk](mailto:membership@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk)

*Data Protection Act: RCC keeps membership records online. This information is not disclosed to third parties.*

## Cycling UK Affiliated Membership

Members of RCC can apply for Cycling UK affiliated membership at £18 per year with the following benefits:

- 3rd party insurance cover of £5,000,000 worldwide except USA and Canada
- Cycling UK membership giving access to a wide range of discounts and benefits, see [www.cyclinguk.org](http://www.cyclinguk.org)
- weekly Cycling UK email newsletter

For more information, email the Membership Secretary on [membership@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk](mailto:membership@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk)

# Chairman's Letter

Dear RCC members,

With all that we know about the impact of travel on our town, country, planet, environment, economy and health, schools should be right there in the business of preparing people for the future.

So we discussed doing some research into how schools deal with it.

There are seven schools inside 1.5km from my house: the Blessed Hugh Faringdon, the new Wren School and Southcote Primary are the closest; under 1 km, St Edward's, St Mary and All Saints in Coley are fairly close, Prospect and Manor Primary are just a bit further away.

I contacted all of them by email to ask if they have a school travel plan.

Only one replied.

One.

The one I got was not exactly inspiring. There was not the slightest hint that they might attempt to educate their pupils and staff, in fact it identified a gulf in their knowledge, but had no suggestions to do anything about it. The 'action' plan did not lead me to imagine there actually being any noticeable action.

I have first hand experience of the travel to school impact on the surrounding streets.

In the nearby streets twice daily during the week in term time the impact is breathtaking.

Here are some examples.

Between 08:00 and 09:00 Monday to Friday in term time, nobody can drive out of my street without a five minute wait at the end of my road. My neighbours are to be seen (most on their way to the town centre or the hospital where they work, 2-3 km away) queuing every morning. During the school holidays there is no queue at all.

If I walk along Southcote Lane in the morning, parents leaving the primary school in Silchester Road leave the one way system created years ago outside the school to cope with the congestion and turn left, but they then usually pull a U-turn to avoid getting trapped by the bus lane camera and head back along Southcote Lane towards the Bath Road. Where they pull the U-turn also happens to be the drop off point for The Blessed Hugh Faringdon School, where there are dozens of children walking to school who have no proper crossing and are frequently seen scampering across the road to avoid the cars.

The new Wren School also encourages its visitors to arrive using the Southcote Lane entrance, about 300m further down the road towards town, and the drop off scenario here is the same, but also has the complication of all the

drivers leaving the other two schools to contend with. Many parents (and at the moment dozens of contractors too, there are people still working on the site) pull into the residential side streets opposite, trapping residents trying to leave in their cars.

Along the Bath Road on the north side of the Wren School and The Blessed Hugh Faringdon is the new NCN422, a cross town cycle route just designed by Reading Borough Council. There is a slight problem, as it is on the north side of the road, and the schools are on the south side. The Council did alter the crossings at Liebenrood Road just to the west, to permit people to cross on their bikes from north to south, but that only caters for people heading from the west, and to get to either school people on bikes should walk, as this is a narrow pavement, not a cycle path.

Of course the tiny number who do cycle don't get off and push, so they learn at an early age that cycle routes in Reading are inadequate. If they come from the east there is no crossing for the new school until they are well past it (it is the crossing I just mentioned). So there are all sorts of ways pupils make their way to the new school, making their own way across the roundabout where all the queuing parents and local residents are sat in their cars trying to get to work. Why on earth RBC didn't design the new NCN422 to cater for

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# Chairman's Letter

children cycling to the new school and the old one, I can't imagine.

The signposted local cycle network Route 5 goes down Southcote Lane, but there isn't any infrastructure, not even any paint; it is a road on which people can park their cars. And on which hundreds of drivers are struggling with their cars on their commute, and of course there are staff heading to the schools in their cars, so any child cycling on this route will wonder why it is signposted as part of the network. This is not a quiet road!

The route heads south along a once quiet road to head towards Coley, but due to the new school that road is now a drop-off for the new school, and cycling past these cars is really hazardous. Passengers are often throwing open their doors without looking, and the drivers are then pulling off and trying to turn around to get back into the traffic on the busier road.

You need to be an extraordinarily perceptive, experienced and confident cyclist to ride on the road around here in the rush hour. The cycle route passes within 100m of Southcote Primary School, and there is a quiet alleyway that links the two. Cycling is prohibited here, and to make damn sure no one ignores the no-cycling notice, there are heavy duty steel barriers to keep them from trying to ride through.

I live 400m from that barrier. My neighbour is 20m further away. When they expanded the school a couple of years ago, they built a smashing new car park for staff. Someone in my road avails herself of a spot there every day to park her high powered sports car. She is so close that she can come home in her car for lunch. So she makes that 420m journey four times a day. Actually it is more like a 1000m journey - remember me saying the school has a one way system? She has to go to the far end of it to join the queue to get past the school, so she can get into the school car park. I am sure it is quicker to walk.

I walked many times when my kids were schooled there. We rode once, so I could leave my son and his bike at the school, and I could ride on to work. The head made such a fuss about it that my son was embarrassed in front of his peers, and never rode there again.



Adrian Lawson

Why isn't anyone making a fuss about an unnecessary car trip?

Happily children are welcome to cycle there, and there is a cycle parking shed, but it amazes me how far away it is from the actual building. It is on the far side of the car park, so those that have driven, park nearer than those that have ridden. I haven't been to see how many children currently cycle, I am hoping to do so when the school admin replies to my request to discuss the school travel plan.

All I can say for sure is that every school day is a nightmare on the streets of Southcote. And despite spending £450,000 on NCN422 that runs right through the area, and actually avoids all these schools, I only see a handful of people cycling along it, no more than I used to see cycling on the pavement before it was converted to shared use.

I asked the Council what they are planning to do, and it turns out they have been doing a fair bit. But if the cycle network actually linked the schools themselves, if the plans for the new school put sustainable travel at the top of the agenda for anyone getting to school, if the schools all engaged their staff and pupils to discourage driving the way the primary school once discouraged my child from cycling, maybe we could make a difference. As it is the school trip causes the most ridiculous environmental and societal problems almost without check, and almost totally needlessly.

Adrian Lawson

## YES, I WANT TO JOIN RCC!

Name: Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms (please select)

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

- I would like details of how I can help with Campaign activities
- I am a member of Cycling UK

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about the Campaign?

- Individual membership (annual) £3
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I enclose a cheque for £..... covering my membership and a donation\* of £.....

\*An additional donation to help fund our activities would be very much appreciated

Please make cheques payable to **Reading Cycle Campaign** and send together with the completed form to:  
**RCC Membership Secretary, Reading Cycle Campaign, 29 Church Road, Earley, Reading RG6 1EY**

Alternatively you could join online via [www.readingcyclecampaign.org.uk/join-us/](http://www.readingcyclecampaign.org.uk/join-us/)

**Data Protection Act:** Reading Cycle Campaign keeps membership records online. Please be reassured this information is not disclosed to third parties.

### Our Mission



- To campaign for better facilities for cyclists in Reading, in particular a network of safe cycleways linking residential, industrial and commercial areas, and giving access to the town centre.
- To work with Sustrans, Cycling UK (both locally and nationally) and others interested in promoting cycling and the well-being of cyclists.
- To identify the needs of cyclists in Reading, for example the location of safe and secure parking, and to campaign for their provision.
- To work with and advise local authorities and, where necessary, criticise and highlight their shortcomings.

# Meeting With Matt Rodda MP

Matt Rodda MP took time out of his busy schedule on 2 November to meet Adrian Lawson, John Lee and Brian Morley to discuss what he could do for the Reading Cycle Campaign.

He introduced himself as being a Reading Councillor in 2011 before he became MP for Reading East. He walks across Christchurch Bridge to catch his train to London, and sometimes he takes his fold-up bike with him.

As he is currently Shadow Minister for Local Transport, this includes buses, taxis, walking and cycling. Currently he is focusing on a new scheme to get bus passes for young people as well as pensioners. The Labour Party has a policy that looks at improving cycling infrastructure in big cities like London and Manchester, to make people feel safer to cycle.

He acknowledged that cyclists ride on the pavement because they are scared of riding on the road. However, for most civil engineers looking at road infrastructure, cycling is merely an 'add on', and Councils tend to forget about this altogether. New road building only focuses on the car, including new housing estates. He acknowledged there was a prejudice against cycling.

John Lee asked about linking cycling with health and wondered if the cycle network could be funded from the health budget.

Matt Rodda said he understood the connection between cycling and health. Everybody should walk at least 2 miles a day, and how the lack of proper exercise results in increasing obesity which can affect general wellbeing.

Adrian Lawson asked what Matt thought about improving air quality and the

effects on climate change. Matt acknowledged the need to move away from diesel engines to using electric hybrids. Short delivery journeys or the last few miles of transportation should look at using cargo bikes instead of large lorries.

John Lee asked about subsidies such as a scrappage scheme that only go to the motorists and on motorway upgrades, when it could be spent on e-bikes in towns.

Matt Rodda spoke about keeping up the pressure to change behaviour and how this affects the environment, such as parking levies, congestion charges, restricting use to only electric cars in town centres, and city-friendly public transport.

John Lee reminded Matt about increasing house building without infrastructure in



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# Meeting With Matt Rodda MP

place, which includes unsuitable links for buses and cycling facilities to get people into the town centres. There is plenty of encouragement for electric cars rather than for cycling facilities.

Brian Morley said it was a myth that cyclists do not buy much in town centres. This may be why cyclists are discouraged. Provision of more cycle racks in Broad Street would bring more shoppers to the area.

Matt Rodda asked for more information about this. He acknowledged the lack of vision in local government, and that both politicians and officers have utter contempt for cyclists. Local authorities don't know how to use their funding correctly or appropriately. They are hindered by local level bureaucracy and don't listen to advice, especially from lobby groups.

Adrian Lawson said a Cycling Czar is needed for each area to review each transport design guide. Hopefully this will go towards prevention of shared pavement use. John Lee mentioned inappropriate schemes like the controversial MRT route, which is only applicable for 1% of pedestrians and cyclists.

Matt Rodda confirmed he was aware of cycle paths should follow the best procedure as regarding dooring. Adrian Lawson said he has met with Simon Beasley regarding dooring.

John Lee said a Cycle Forum meeting had discussed improving conditions in university parking, including looking at speed and parking controls. Simon Beasley was quite helpful and said he would speak to Tony Page, who tends to be more focused on finding money for the buses, preferring to promote more bus use rather than encouraging people to cycle.

Adrian Lawson explained the Close Pass Initiative to Matt Rodda, when plain clothed policeman on bikes who have experienced close passing relay details of the miscreants to their colleagues ahead, who stop them to 'have a chat'. This inexpensive deterrent worked on word of mouth to publicise it to other car users.

John Lee said more enforcement could be done with speed cameras which actually have film in them. Lorries need to be designed like the 'London Lorry'



Matt Rodda MP

with lower windows so that cyclists, pedestrians and cars can be seen. Currently lorry drivers cannot see the ground for the 4m in front of them. Also HGV mirrors consist of four sets on each side

which are stacked in a non-cognitive way with the top one being for the lowest vision. Matt acknowledged he needed to find out more about this.

Matt Rodda said there was a need to find out what could be done quickly; however looking at speed limits could be more difficult. The Close Pass Initiative idea is more plausible, and momentum could be built by demonstration to make this more acceptable. Consultation is needed for radical change, and the community need to show they want it.

Brian Morley stressed reinforcement is key. Police have said that they have issued 30 tickets for speeding of over 30mph in a 20mph zone in the area of Christchurch Road and adjoining streets. These seem to have been the only action since the much abused 20mph East Reading area started two years ago.

Matt Rodda said cameras need to issue automatic tickets via radar technology. However, there is a lack of awareness by those who drive big cars and live in villages, who only drive to activities and talk to people who live in similar situations. Adrian Lawson said this only results in building more roads.

John Lee asked about park and ride facilities. They should be placed further out from towns and cities, with the country buses suitably subsidised to help with transport and to prevent them from being shut down. More cycle racks should be included to encourage more cycling.

John then moved onto road markings and mentioned the 19 incidents on the Vastern Road Roundabout, which has the worst road markings combined with speeding traffic that doesn't give way.

He showed Matt Rodda information on Dutch style markings, such as elephant footprints and shark's teeth at crossings that aren't always available in the UK.

Matt Rodda said there was a need to enforce speed and signage changes. Cycling should be encouraged to make it more normal, including walking into town centres and to the station, enhanced with a café environment to make it more attractive and enjoyable.

John reminded Matt that pedestrians don't have priority at side road junctions in the UK. There is also difficulty to enforce giving way when turning left. He suggested tightening up the road radius as a national guidance for road design. Studies done in London reveal a 30% reduction in collisions at junctions.

Adrian Lawson explained cyclists have to give way far less on the road than on a shared pavement for the same stretch of road on the NCN422.

Matt Rodda approved the Dutch style markings for junctions, but he said drivers will need to be educated to enforce this. Cameras on red lights catch those who jump lights, for example, but he was more worried about dangerous drivers and how to tackle them. There is a need to find a way to simply change driver behaviour.

Adrian Lawson said Close Pass is very effective with less people and fewer resources. John Lee suggested enforcement could include forcing drivers to retake their test, including a quiz for the highway code. Most people don't know what's in the highway code.

Matt Rodda said he was sympathetic to disabled users; those with wheelchairs, pushchairs and the partially sighted. More empathy for equality is needed, linked to local transport and combined with walking and cycling. Adrian Lawson reminded Matt about the barriers on the river paths that only benefit able-bodied people.

Matt Rodda confirmed realistic targets were needed for areas that could be quickly and dramatically changed, such as subsidising bus services for young people. Also there is a need to find a way to deal with emotion against cycling and stimulate a change in thinking.

Alice Elliott

# Chance For New School Routines Scuppered

The first week in September, like many other parents, was the first time I had to brave the school run as my first-born started her school life at Farley Hill near Arborfield. We were extremely happy that she got into the school, but I had been told about the utter chaos around school drop offs; a problem I'm sure every school suffers.

Not to be deterred I did the school run by car, then quickly decided to look for other options and wondered seriously why nothing has been done about it. Maybe parents just got fed up of raising the topic with the Council and getting nowhere (I know that feeling!), but still it's a topic that is important to all parents whose little ones make use of the school so it should not just be swept under the carpet.

The problems are as follows based on the school opening its doors at 8.35am for drop off:

1. To get a parking space anywhere close to school, you need to be there around 8.05am, meaning you need to wait either in your car or at the gate for 30 minutes until you can leave your dearest little one in the care of the school.
2. If you arrive much after 8.05am it's quite possible you will be relegated to parking near the King George Playing Fields almost half a mile away from the school and resulting in an almost 10 minute walk (taking into the account the small strides of a 4 year old). Given the whole door to door journey could be walked in around 30 minutes, this seems like madness (see below).

From my home, the total journey to school is just 1.3 miles which should take 4 minutes in the car. Even at the time this image was taken on Google Maps, the red area captures the drop off problems at the front of the school (see below).

As I am led to understand it, this chaos has been going on for years, almost it seems since time began and Wokingham Borough Council will not do a single thing about it. They also make the situation worse by developing the area and still do not include enough infrastructure to cope. Yes, there is talk of an Arborfield bypass, but what else?

The small town of Arborfield has been subjected to the development of over 3,500 new homes and a brand new secondary school with hundreds of new parents dropping off in the morning;

its local roads that once were quite quiet at rush hour are now almost impassable during the school run. Trying to get to Farley Hill itself is only part of the battle, try getting out of the estate through the various road-works taking place, almost permanently.

I decided to try something different and to document my findings and experiences with a hope that someone, somewhere, will take a common sense view and help provide alternative means to get our kids to school, on time!

## Looking at alternatives

### Walking

Given the shortest route is 1.3 miles, walking would be a viable solution. However, none of the roads to get to the school are either lit or have foot-



paths. The A327 is a fast A road, the now "stopped up" Sheerlands Road is unlit and has no paths and Church Road after crossing the A327 has no footpath (see top opposite).

Walking would simply be taking your life into your own hands, and with a 4 year old in tow this is not an option. Not least I have learned today that Sheerlands Road, during working hours, is "blocked to pedestrians and cyclists for safety reasons". This needs to be investigated as that was not part of the planning terms relating to the development.

# Chance For New School Routines Scuppered



## Cycling

As I have a cycle and trailer, which my daughter loves to travel in, I thought I would give that a go. How hard can it be to cycle 1.3 miles to school and drop her off?

Researching suitable routes I came up with what seemed like an ideal route. This avoided all major busy roads. It is 1 mile further than the direct route but should be relatively safe and non-eventful, so I thought.

It takes a cycle route through the current estate to join a pedestrian crossing at the A327. The plan was then to take a 'track' that runs behind the Poperinge estate to join up at the local, single track roads near to the school (top right).

On paper, this looks perfect. Not too long, avoids traffic, little inconvenience for others and more safety for me and my little one. The reality wasn't quite so rosy.

All goes well up to getting to the track at Poperinge Way. On trying to join the track I find the entrance blocked with dumped trees (below). I have no idea how long they have been there,



but we battled our way over them after dismounting, removing daughter from trailer, dismantling and lifting everything over to then reassemble, reload and remount to continue our journey.

The track itself is unlit and a dirt track. Lots of rocks and very bumpy for my little one to endure in her trailer. On more than one occasion she protested at the lumpiness and the darkness of the area under the trees.

A little way through we were coming to the end of the track, hoping to find at last some tarmac. But first, we had to then negotiate a lake size puddle (right). I dismounted once again and leaned on the bike at an angle while pushing the bike and trailer through the lake to the other side. Mission almost accomplished I remounted and carried on.

From there, it was plain sailing. I arrived at school after a total of 15 minutes from door to door, my little one having a few mud spots on her shirt and tie; but hey, who will notice?



# Chance For New School Routines Scuppered

Once done, it was time for the ride home. I thought I would try my alternative route 2 which would take Church Road, cross the A327 and join Sheerlands Road (see bottom page 9).

Now Sheerlands has recently been "stopped up" due to development work; however it is supposed to be an open pedestrian and cycle way. Not today though, having been blocked off for safety reasons, as I was told by the builder on the gate entrance to the development. I spoke to the guys on the building site who luckily opened it for me. Had they not it would have meant a hazardous ride up the A327 to the roundabout to re-enter the development (see right).

Even with these issues, I still got home a good 20 minutes sooner than in the car, I didn't contribute to the daily carnage at the school gate, I exercised in the process and my baby girl got to



spend a little more time with her dad than otherwise would be possible.

## Conclusion

Such a short journey should be easy, but it has been made difficult by small issues that could easily be resolved.

I call upon the Council to take a common sense view here and provide the

resources needed to allow alternative methods of transport to be used. I am keen and happy to do it, to save significant time, get some exercise and help to relieve the pressure and stress that is being caused at the school gates every morning.

Surely from the vast number of new homes being built, there must be enough section 106 money to revisit the chaos at Farley Hill and put some of it to good use to make this daily commute better for everyone.

Given the development of the California Greenway and other cycle initiatives in the area I feel that this route through the rear of Poperinghe Way could be an ideal walking and cycling route to connect the new development of Arborfield to the Farley Hill area, its woodland, copses and of course its primary school.

Darren Tipton

Cycling UK Reading



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 Or contact: Sel Dixon, Secretary Reading CTC by emailing [secretary@readingctc.co.uk](mailto:secretary@readingctc.co.uk)  
 or by phone or text on 07867 442046

# Getting Children Cycling - On Roads!

Maybe you've noticed an increase in groups of children in high visibility jackets cycling on a range of roads around your local area during the school day since the summer?

You might have recollections of 'cycling proficiency' from your own or children's times with all its signalling and going round cones and wondered why they're not sticking to cycle paths or the playground.

Welcome to the new 21st century 'Bikeability', which is as different from 'Cycling Proficiency' as the smartphone is to the original Alexander Bell telephone!



Bikeability has now been operating for over 10 years, but over the last few months has undergone an even more radical overhaul in Reading with the roll out of the new scheme with an emphasis on giving children the maximum exposure to *independent* cycling on roads. Would you cycle down Basingstoke or Henley Road? Well plenty of Bikeability trainees have!

As Bikeability instructors (also parents, grandparents, aunts or uncles) we have an immense responsibility for ensuring the children's early experience of cycling on roads and in areas with traffic is a good one - both from safety and enjoyment! It's a hugely rewarding role - from the look of joy on a child's face when they first balance while pedalling, to seeing them develop on roads and eager to cycle more!

We want to encourage more children to cycle to school and on other journeys more often with their parents and friends or even alone, and this generation of Bikeability trainees will have been given more skills than the

majority of adults on bikes! It's a hugely rewarding role.

Funded by central government, Bikeability is provided free to schools and parents/children mainly during term time, but also run in holiday or afterschool clubs.

Focusing on the four main skills: observation, communication, positioning and priorities, it teaches 'real' cycling.

Level 1 covers the basic bike handling skills in a non-road environment: including steering, braking, signalling and using gears. Level 2 then moves

onto roads in groups of up to six children, with the focus on them gaining rapid experience of cycling with traffic and learning how and where to cycle safely. Generally it's run in Year 5 (which are 9 and 10 year olds).

Level 3 is generally taken in Year 6 (for 10 and 11 year olds) and

takes Level 2 skills to busier roads and includes more complex junctions such as roundabouts. The aim is to enable children to cycle alone on the majority of roads around Reading and onto their senior school in Year 7.

Many adults would consider this very early to be giving 9-11 year old children such freedom, but experience across the country and thorough training and experience of Bikeability Instructors has proven otherwise.

In addition to providing pupils with valuable road safety skills, Bikeability supports School Travel Plans, which have a target to reduce the number of children arriving by car. There is also a national scheme called 'Modeshift Stars', which recognises and rewards schools that have demonstrated excellence in supporting cycling, walking and other forms of sustainable transport.

We all know the arguments in support of cycling, including health and the environment, but the barriers are also



too readily given. However, the one most often cited by parents, that roads are too dangerous, is a self-fulfilling prophecy when it comes to the 'school run'. We all see huge congestion around school start and finish times, which diminishes in the holidays, so initiatives helping to reduce this are welcomed. And if more children did cycle, then of course the roads would be much quieter!

In addition to delivering Bikeability, teaching children to learn to ride and also running bike maintenance sessions with and for children, Avanti Cycling has been piloting 'Bike Trains' in several schools. Working with local parents, this can be a great way of getting nervous parents/children to cycle 'independently'. Anyone interested in helping set up or run one of these at their children's school should contact their school's Bikeability Co-ordinator or Greg Woodford of Avanti Cycling on [greg.woodford@avanticycling.co.uk](mailto:greg.woodford@avanticycling.co.uk) or visit [avanticycling.co.uk/bikeability](http://avanticycling.co.uk/bikeability)

We're really pleased that the DfT has recently increased the number of funded places for Bikeability, which means that Reading schools have an additional 400 places in 2018/19, bringing the total to over 2,000 places across the various levels.

So if you have school age children or grandchildren or friends/neighbours, do encourage them to take Bikeability training and keep on cycling!

**Karen Robertson**  
Events Coordinator

## CycleReading Advertising

For 1/6 page display advert (87.5mm x 80mm)  
RCC members £6 • Non-members £12  
Bikes 'n' Bits (text only) free to RCC members  
Contact the Editor (details below)



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You can now find RCC on Facebook:  
<http://www.facebook.com/ReadingCycleCampaign>  
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### Next newsletter copy deadline: 1 February 2019

The newsletter will now be delivered electronically to members. If you'd prefer to receive a paper copy, please email [newsletter@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@readingcyclecampaign.org.uk)

## Council Contacts

Please let the relevant campaign officer know of anything you've reported.

### Reading Borough Council

Highway queries: 0118 937 3797; parking: 0118 937 3767;  
potholes: 0800 626540

### Wokingham Borough Council

0118 974 6302 or [www.wokingham.gov.uk](http://www.wokingham.gov.uk)

### West Berkshire Council

01635 519080 or [www.westberks.org.uk](http://www.westberks.org.uk)

### Windsor and Maidenhead

[www.rbwm.gov.uk](http://www.rbwm.gov.uk)

### Oxfordshire County Council

Roads and Transport: 0845 310 1111

## Monthly Meetings

7.30pm on the 3rd Wednesday of each month:

**Wed 16 Jan 2019 - cttee mtg**

**Wed 20 Feb 2019 - open mtg**

**Wed 20 Mar 2019 - cttee mtg**

Held in Room 1 of RISC, up the stairs beyond the bar. See RCC Facebook Page for updates. We hope to see you there.

## Advertising Rates:

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RCC members £6 - Non-members £12

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**1/2 page (180mm x 120mm):**

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RCC members £25 - Non members £50

*Bikes 'n' Bits (text only) free to RCC members*

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